Hana Floyd

Ms. Krafft

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*Death of a Salesman*

In Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman,* Linda, Willy Loman’s wife, plays a central role as the only female main character of the play. The play focuses largely on the pressure placed on men to gain material success. Linda serves as a foundation for her family to rely on. The male characters fantasize while Linda is able to focus on reality and still support their dreams. Linda symbolizes the strength, support and patience of domestic wives during the time that is essential to keeping a peaceful and balanced family.

The world Linda inhabits only allows her to have a supporting role but she takes this role with pride and determination serving as the “foundation and support” for her family. Throughout the play, Linda can be seen always being cheerful “with youthful energy” when greeting her husband and attempting to make Willy feel better when he is depressed by focusing on his positive characteristics (21). Linda is a victim of the story in the way that she has married a man that has trouble paying off the debts he owes and it is not easy for a woman during the time to find a high paying job. She takes the commitment of marriage seriously standing by her husband and enduring the financial struggle with him. While her husband dreams and lies of his success, Linda is forced to focus on reality and think about how they will pay their debts and fix their house (22-23). She is very focused on the economics of her family’s situation.

Linda is a woman of “infinite patience” and love for her family even though her family does not return the same kind of support back to her. Willy is desperate for love and respect but does not appreciate the large amount of it he gets from his wife. Willy is often disrespectful toward Linda and does not show interest in her comments or ideas. For example, when Willy and the boys are getting excited about a potential business idea, Willy does not allow Linda to be included in the conversation (47-48). She gets upset by Biff leaving for months at a time without letting her know in advance and without giving her an address to send letters to. The support she has for her family leads her into a submissive background role.

Although Linda lets her opinions and comments go unheard in many matters, she shows the goodwill of motherhood by speaking up against immoral actions even when Willy supports them. She worries about Biff stealing lumber while Willy only comments on the high quality of the lumber he stole (35). Linda also voices concern when she hears that Biff stole a football from school and when Biff fights with Uncle Ben (34). Linda is a warm and caring character that wants the most for her family. She supports the unrealistic fantasies of success that her family members come up with while remaining down to earth focusing on reality. She shows toughness and patience by having the ability to remain calm when her husband bullies and degrades her. The sons are able to use her as a buffer between themselves and their dad because of her submissive and agreeable attitude. Even though the situation of this family is far from ideal, Linda serves as a foundation and keeps this family together.